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Original Article

POPULARITY AND PREFERRENCES IN DIGITAL SHOPPING OF APPARELS: AN EMPHIRICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The concept of shopping confidence reflects consumers' belief in their ability to shop for clothing and select the right products for themselves. Online shopping behaviour of youth in Chennai was considered based on four concepts such as Popularity, Preferences, Factors and Constraints. 175 questionnaires were distributed among the respondents that has been conveniently selected, of which 143 (81.7%) were responded. Our data reveals that majority of the buyers will continue to purchase online even if there are no discounts. It appears from the study that about 41.3% of the respondents preferred mobile app than other modes of digital shopping. The respondents prefer mobile as the preferred devise to use for digital shopping. This study also reveals that irrespective of the gender as well as the age group, the respondents opined that the cheap product, damaged product and the delay in delivery are the major constrains during the digital shopping.

KEYWORDS: Online Shopping, E-Tailing, Online Constraints, Shopping Behaviour & Online Retail

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INTRODUCTION

Online retailing means selling merchandise through online using internet, either through his / her own network or by various shopping sites and also includes online market place. Digital transformation and latest changing information technology are playing a vital role in improvising root of e-tailing and has mushroomed in India, at present contributes about 15% of the organized retail and is expected to reach 25% by 2020 and can even increase manifold in next ten years as digital network would spread in the rural areas with economy driven middle class (The Hindu) dated 1.6.2016. In this study, an attempt has been made to capture the evolving consumer dynamics that perhaps drive the next phase of e-tailing. Our data reveals that majority of the buyers will continue to purchase online even if there are no discounts.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Online retailing is a revolutionary in the global retail industry and is giving an alarming competition in traditional retail. Online retailing is like money making from the wallets of the customers to the bank statements of the retailers. (Poonia, 2015)

The E-tailing website is like the entrance door of the online store where the online seller and the consumer can interact and make transaction without too much time. In India, consumers are increasingly tilting towards online to shop. Consumers are always craving for modern ways of shopping and to retain an e-customer,

e-tailers must attract through innovative means. (Mankar & Muley, 2016)

The concept of shopping confidence reflects consumers’ belief in their ability to shop for clothing and select the right products for themselves. Brand or store loyalty describes a consumer’s tendency to continue to patronize the brand and /or online store they prefer, which also suggests self confidence in the consumer’s ability to evaluate alternatives. In this study, convenience consciousness refers to consumers’ preference to put minimal effort into the clothing purchase process. Convenience therefore implies concern for ease-of-use issues such as accessibility and simplicity of navigation (Gehrt et al., 2007; Workman & Cho, 2012).

A retail atmosphere is believed to exert significant cognitive, attitudinal and emotional impacts on purchasing (Das, 2014; Levy & Weitz, 2001) by “drawing consumers in, keeping them engaged and enhancing their shopping experience” (Elliot & Maier, 2014,).

OBJECTIVES

The objective of the study were

- To identify the popularity in online shopping among the customers
- To ascertain the popular shopping websites among the customers.
- To know the features preferred by customers in online shopping sites.
- To identify the customers preferred device of online shopping.
- To study the factors influencing online shopping sites.
- To identity the constraints faced by customers in online shopping.

HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses were formulated based on the objectives.

- There exists popularity in online shopping among the customers.
- There exists significance in the features preferred by customers in online shopping sites.
- There exists uniformity among the customers in the preferred device of online shopping.
- There exist factors influencing online shopping sites.
- There exist constraints in online shopping by customers.

SAMPLE

About 175 questionnaires were distributed among the respondents that has been conveniently selected, of which 143 (81.7%) were responded. Out of 143 respondents, 38 (26.6%) were male and 105 (73.4%) were female. 59 (41.3%) respondents were in the age group of under 21, 84(58.7%) respondents were in the age group of above 21. 84 (58.7%) respondents were +2 qualified, 37 (25.9%) were graduates and 22 (15.4%) were post graduates. 112(78.3%)respondents were students. 101 (70.6%) respondents' annual income were less than rupees two lakhs and 26 (18.2%) respondents' annual income were between rupees 2-4 lakhs. 127 (88.8%) respondents were single and 16 (11.2%) were married. 106

(74.1%) respondents were hailing from urban and 30 (21%) were from semi urban.

DATA ANALYSIS

Online shopping behaviour of youth in Chennai was considered based on four concepts such as Popularity, Preferences, Factors and Constraints.

Popularity

Popularity has been analysed based on "*Popular Shopping Website*", "*Website Offering Coupons*" and "*Frequency of Visiting Coupon Sit*es".

Popular Shopping Websites

The customers' opinions on the most popular shopping websites for apparel shopping were ascertained and the same has been shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Popular Shopping Websites

S. No.	Description	Frequency	Percent
1	Amazon	30	21.0
2	Clovia	1	.7
3	Ebay	1	.7
4	Flipkart	38	26.6
5	Forever	1	.7
6	Jabong	13	9.1
7	Koovs	12	8.4
8	Myntra	41	28.7
9	Snapdeal	2	1.4
10	Stalkbuylove	1	.7
11	Street stlye store	1	.7
12	Voonik	1	.7
13	Zara	1	.7
Total		**143**	**100.0**

The most popular online shopping site that has been preferred by the respondents were 'Myntra' (28.7%) followed by 'Flip kart' (26.6%) and Amazon (21%). The least preferred were Clovia, Ebay, Forever, Stalk buy love, Street stlye store, Voonik and Zara.

Memberships in Websites Offering Coupons

Today more number of websites offering coupons in order to propagate and enhance the use of online shopping. These coupons were offered by either outside online shoppers or through online shopping agency. The no. of respondents those who were members in websites offering coupons have been ascertained and the same is shown in table 2.

Table 2: Memberships in Websites Offering Coupons

S. No.	Description	Frequency	Percent
1	Yes	21	14.7
2	No	122	85.3
Total		**143**	**100.0**

Out of 143 respondents, only 21 (14.7%) respondents become member in the websites which offers coupons. Majority of the respondents i.e 122 (85.3%) have not enrolled as member in these websites may be due to unaware about

the discount coupons or may not be interested to enrol as members. 122 (85.3%) indicated no to the membership.

Frequency of Visiting Websites Offering Coupons

The study has further extended to identify the frequency of visit by the respondents on this coupon offering websites. The same is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Frequency of Visiting Websites Offering Coupons

S. No.	Description	Frequency	Percent
1	Couple of times a week	11	7.7
2	Never	77	53.8
3	Once a day	3	2.1
4	Once a week	20	14.0
5	Whenever required	32	22.4
Total		**143**	**100.0**

77 (53.8%) respondents indicated that they never visited the websites offering coupons which indicates that majority of the respondents are not interested on coupons. 32 (22.4%) respondents indicated that they visit the websites whenever required. It can be inferred that digital shoppers continue to buy products online even without discounts, which is the current trend among e-tailers.

Preferences

The preferences were analysed based on "*Features of Digital Shopping*" and "*Preferred Devices of Digital Shopping*".

Preferred Features of Digital Shopping

The Preferred features of shopping sites have been analysed based on seven variables such as functional design, visual and auditory content, communication with company, communication with users, links to other websites, products and services sold and payment gateway. The opinions were obtained on a 5 point scale such No idea, Almost Essential, Essential, Very essential and Must. The mean and standard deviation are calculated based on the responses and the rank was assigned which is shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Preferred Features of Digital Shopping

S. No.	Description	No Idea		Almost Essential		Essential		V. essential		Must		Mean	STD	Rank
1	Functional design	58	40.6%	57	39.9%	22	15.4%	5	3.5%	1	.7%	1.84	.861	7
2	Visual and auditory content	33	23.1%	77	53.8%	21	14.7%	11	7.7%	1	.7%	2.09	.863	6
3	Communication with company	16	11.2%	57	39.9%	52	36.4%	17	11.9%	1	.7%	2.51	.871	2
4	Communication with users	19	13.3%	58	40.6%	44	30.8%	20	14.0%	2	1.4%	2.50	.941	3
5	Links to other websites	16	11.2%	47	32.9%	41	28.7%	34	23.8%	5	3.5%	2.76	1.050	1
6	Products and services sold	26	18.2%	75	52.4%	31	21.7%	10	7.0%	1	.7%	2.20	.841	5
7	Payment gateway	41	28.7%	49	34.3%	34	23.8%	16	11.2%	3	2.1%	2.24	1.055	4

The mean value ranges between 1.84 and 2.76 which indicates that all the seven variables were lies between almost essential and essential. The standard deviation ranges between 0.841 and 1.055 which indicates that there were no

deviations in respondents' opinion. The most preferred features of digital shopping by the respondents were "links to other web sites". It is followed by "communication with company" and "communication with users". The least preferred features were "functional design" and "visual and auditory content".

Hierarchical Cluster Analysis has been employed to group these 7 variables. The dendrogram thus derived is shown in figure 1. At 75% level, there exist two clusters. The cluster 1 comprises of Communication with company, Communication with users and Links to other websites and this cluster has been named as "Primary features for online shopping". The second cluster comprises of Functional design, Visual and auditory content, Products & services sold and Payment gateway which can be named as "Other requisite features for online shopping"

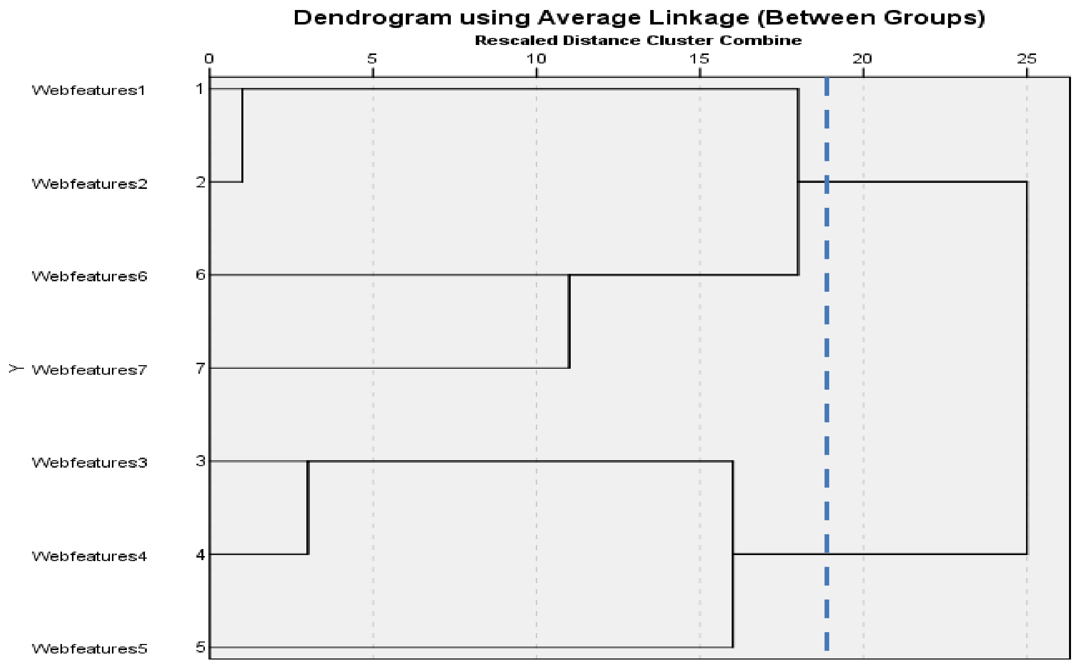

Figure 1: Hierarchical Cluster Analysis

Proximity Matrix

In order to identify the close relation between the variables, proximity matrix has been employed and the same is shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Proximity Matrix for Preferred Features of Digital Shopping

Description	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Functional design	.000						
Visual and auditory content	126.000	.000					
Communication with company	252.000	176.000	.000				
Communication with users	246.000	178.000	136.000	.000			
Links to other websites	337.000	281.000	211.000	183.000	.000		
Products and services sold	211.000	185.000	183.000	227.000	290.000	.000	
Payment gateway	231.000	209.000	197.000	245.000	296.000	176.000	.000

Closely Related Variables

- Visual & auditory content and function design
- Communication with users and Communication with company

- Communication with company and Visual and auditory content
- Payment gateway and Products & services sold

Distinctly Related Variables

- Links to other websites and Functional design
- Payment gateway and Links to other websites
- Products & services sold and Links to other websites

The study has further been extended to identify the preferred features among gender and age group. The same has been compared with overall mean value. The mean values of seven variables based on gender and the age group and over all were shown in Table 6 and 7.

Table 6: Preferred Features of Digital Shopping Vs Gender

S. No.	Description	Male			Female			Overall	
		Mean	Std.	Rank	Mean	Std.	Rank	Mean	Std.
1	Functional design	1.71	.835	7	1.89	.870	7	1.84	.861
2	Visual and auditory content	2.03	.885	6	2.11	.858	6	2.09	.863
3	Communication with company	2.29	.654	3	2.59	.927	2	2.51	.871
4	Communication with users	2.34	.745	2	2.55	1.000	3	2.50	.941
5	Links to other websites	2.68	1.141	1	2.78	1.019	1	2.76	1.050
6	Products and services sold	2.13	.704	5	2.22	.888	5	2.20	.841
7	Payment gateway	2.16	1.079	4	2.27	1.049	4	2.24	1.055

The most preferred features of digital shopping web sites, irrespective of male and female respondents were “links to other web sites”. It is followed by “communication with users” and “communication with company”. Both male and female respondents were unanimous in indicating their opinion in the case of least preferred features which is functional design and visual and auditory content.

Table 7: Preferred Features of Digital Shopping Vs Age

S. No.	description	Under 21			Above 21			Overall		
		Mean	Std.	Rank	Mean	Std.	Rank	Mean	Std.	Rank
1	Functional design	1.85	.847	7	1.83	.876	7	1.84	.861	7
2	Visual and auditory content	2.10	.941	6	2.08	.810	6	2.09	.863	6
3	Communication with company	2.71	.948	2	2.37	.788	3	2.51	.871	2
4	Communication with users	2.58	.951	3	2.44	.936	2	2.50	.941	3
5	Links to other websites	2.76	1.119	1	2.75	1.005	1	2.76	1.050	1
6	Products and services sold	2.17	.791	5	2.21	.879	4	2.20	.841	5
7	Payment gateway	2.32	1.074	4	2.18	1.043	5	2.24	1.055	4

The respondents of both age groups below 21 and above 21 indicated their first preferred feature as links to other websites. The second and third preferred features of the respondents were communication with the company and communication with others. The least preferred features were synchronized with both the age groups which were functional design and visual & auditory content.

The mean value of under 21 age group ranges between 1.85 and 2.76 which indicate that the respondents’ opinion lies between almost essential and essential. The mean value of above 21 age group ranges between 1.83 and 2.75. The standard deviation of both the age group srange between 0.810 and 1.119 which indicate that there was no much deviation

in their opinion.

Preferred Device of Digital Shopping

Normally the digital shopping will be carried out using the devises such as desktop and mobile or both. The preferred device of the respondents in online shopping was ascertained and the same has been shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Preferred Device

S. No.	Description	Frequency	Percent
1	Desktop	30	21.0
2	Mobile	59	41.3
3	Both	54	37.8
Total		**143**	**100.0**

Out of 143 respondents, 59 (41.3%) respondents indicated that they prefer mobile for online shopping. It is followed by both desktop and mobile (54, 37.8%). Only 30 (21%) respondents preferred desktop. It is inferred that mobile is the most preferred device for online shopping may be due to the convenience and ease of use irrespective of environment.

Factors Influencing Digital Shopping

The Factors influencing digital shopping sites have been analysed based on five points scale namely not at all, slightly, certain extent, moderate and maximum extent. The six variables that were taken up for the study are user interface, variety of products, apparel choice, brand, knit or woven and fashion brands. The opinions of the respondents are shown in Table 9 with mean and standard deviation values.

Table 9: Factors Influencing Digital Shopping

S. No.	Description	Not at all		Slightly		Certain extent		Moderate		Maximum extent		Mean	STD	Rank
1	User interface	37	25.9%	63	44.1%	38	26.6%	4	2.8%	1	.7%	2.08	.835	6
2	Variety of products	29	20.3%	73	51.0%	35	24.5%	6	4.2%	0	0%	2.13	.777	5
3	Apparel choice	23	16.1%	70	49.0%	44	30.8%	5	3.5%	1	.7%	2.24	.787	3
4	Brand	32	22.4%	64	44.8%	37	25.9%	10	7.0%	0	0%	2.17	.858	4
5	Knits or woven	15	10.5%	47	32.9%	55	38.5%	21	14.7%	5	3.5%	2.68	.969	1
6	Fashion Brands	36	25.2%	56	39.2%	36	25.2%	9	6.3%	6	4.2%	2.25	1.038	2

The mean value of the variables ranges between 2.08 and 2.68 which indicate that the factors influencing the digital shopping lies from moderate to maximum extent. Based on the mean value, the first three influencing factors identified were “knits or woven”, “fashion brands” and “apparel choice”. The least influencing factors were “user interface” and “variety of products”. The standard deviation ranges between 0.777 and 1.038 which indicates that there were no deviations in respondents’ opinion.

Further, the analysis has been extended to the gender of the respondents and the opinions were shown in Table 10.

Table 10: Factors Influencing Online Shopping Sites Vs Gender

S. No	Description	Male			Female		
		Mean	Std.	Rank	Mean	Std.	Rank
1	User interface	1.89	.727	5	2.15	.864	6
2	Variety of products	1.87	.704	6	2.22	.784	4
3	Apparel choice	2.24	.820	2	2.24	.779	3

Table 10: Contd.,							
4	Brand	2.08	.941	4	2.21	.829	5
5	Knits or wovens	2.58	.889	1	2.71	.997	1
6	Fashion Brands	2.18	.801	3	2.28	1.114	2

The opinions of the male and female respondents were identical in the case of most influencing factor that is “knits or woven”. The second and third influencing factors were “apparel choice and fashion brands” with change in their order of influence. The least influencing factors by male respondents were “variety of products” whereas the female respondents opined as “user interface and brand”.

The analyses have also been extended to age of the respondents. The mean, standard deviation and ranks were assigned and the same is shown in Table 11.

Table 11: Factors Influencing Digital Shopping Vs Age

S. No.	Description	Under 21			Above 21			Total		
		Mean	Std.	Rank	Mean	Std.	Rank	Mean	Std.	Rank
1	User interface	2.19	.819	5	2.01	.843	6	2.08	.835	6
2	Variety of products	2.25	.843	4	2.04	.719	5	2.13	.777	5
3	Apparel choice	2.36	.826	2	2.15	.752	4	2.24	.787	3
4	Brand	2.19	.891	6	2.17	.889	3	2.17	.858	4
5	Knits or woven	2.56	.970	1	2.76	.965	1	2.68	.969	1
6	Fashion Brands	2.36	1.141	3	2.18	.959	2	2.25	1.038	2

The overall mean value of the respondents’ age group is between 2.08 and 2.68 which indicate that the respondents’ opinion is towards moderate to maximum extent. The respondents of both age groups below 21 and above 21 indicated their first influencing factor as knits or woven. The second and third influencing factors of the respondents under 21 were apparel choice followed by fashion brands whereas above 21age group has given fashion brands as second influencing factor followed by brand. The least influencing factor in respect of under 21 were brand whereas users interface as least preference. The standard deviation ranges between 0.819 and 1.141 which indicates that there was no much deviation in their opinion.

Constraints of Digital Shopping

The constraints of digital shopping have been analysed based on five variables such as no cash on delivery (COD), delay in delivery, non-delivery, damaged product and cheap product. The mean and standard deviation were calculated. The opinions of the respondents were given in Table 12 along with ranks thus assigned based on the mean and standard deviation.

Table 12: Constraints of Digital Shopping

S. No.	Description	Not at all		Slightly		Certain extent		Moderate		Maximum extent		M	SD	R
1	No COD	38	26.6%	15	10.5%	26	18.2%	26	18.2%	38	26.6%	3.08	1.557	4
2	Delay in Delivery	14	9.8%	20	14.0%	38	26.6%	38	26.6%	33	23.1%	3.39	1.256	3
3	Non delivery	24	16.8%	31	21.7%	35	24.5%	21	14.7%	32	22.4%	3.04	1.394	5
4	Damaged Product	18	12.6%	14	9.8%	32	22.4%	38	26.6%	41	28.7%	3.49	1.337	2
5	Cheap product	20	14.0%	11	7.7%	32	22.4%	27	18.9%	53	37.1%	3.57	1.412	1

The mean value of all the five variables lies between 3.04 and 3.57 which indicate that the respondents' opinion lies between certain extent and moderate. The standard deviation ranges between 1.256 and 1.557 which indicate that that there were no deviations in respondents' opinion. While ranking the constraints of digital shopping, cheap product is placed as 1st constraint followed by damaged product (2nd rank) and delay in delivery (3rd rank). Non delivery got the least constraint (5th rank) followed by no cash on delivery.

The analysis has further been extended to gender of the respondents. The mean and standard deviation thus calculated based on opinion were shown in Table 13 along with rank assigned based on mean and standard deviation.

Table 13: Constraints while Shopping Online Vs Gender

S. No.	Description	Male			Female		
		Mean	Std.	Rank	Mean	Std.	Rank
1	No COD	3.16	1.386	4	3.05	1.619	5
2	Delay in Delivery	3.34	1.072	1	3.41	1.321	3
3	Non delivery	2.92	1.402	5	3.09	1.394	4
4	Damaged Product	3.21	1.318	2	3.59	1.335	2
5	Cheap product	3.18	1.373	3	3.71	1.405	1

The male respondents opined "delay in delivery" as the prime constraint followed by "damaged product" and "cheap product". The female respondents opined "cheap product" as first constraint followed by "damaged product". The mean value ranges between 2.92 and 3.34 which indicate that all the variables lie between moderate extents to large extent. The standard deviation ranges between 1.072 and 1.402 which indicates that there has been no significant difference in the opinion among the respondents. The opinion of the respondents differs in respect of male and female. Further the analyses has been extended to the age of the respondents which is Table 14.

Table 14: Constraints of Digital Shopping Vs Age

S. No.	Description	Under 21			Above 21			Overall		
		Mean	Std.	Rank	Mean	Std.	Rank	Mean	Std.	Rank
1	No COD	2.85	1.690	5	3.24	1.445	4	3.08	1.557	4
2	Delay in Delivery	3.31	1.329	3	3.45	1.206	3	3.39	1.256	3
3	Non delivery	3.02	1.432	4	3.06	1.374	5	3.04	1.394	5
4	Damaged Product	3.44	1.317	2	3.52	1.357	1	3.49	1.337	2
5	Cheap product	3.71	1.340	1	3.48	1.460	2	3.57	1.412	1

The mean value of the under 21 age group ranges between 2.85 and 3.71 and above 21 is between 3.06 and 3.52 which indicate that all the variables lie between moderate to large extent. The standard deviation ranges between 1.256 and 1.557 which indicate that there is no significant difference in their opinion. The first three constraints of under 21 age group were cheap product, damaged product and delay in delivery, similarly the first three constraints of above 21 age group were same as that of under 21 with change in the order of the constraints.

FINDINGS

- Out of 175 questionnaires were distributed 143 (81.7%) were responded in which 38 (26.6%) were male and 105 (73.4%) were female. 59 (41.3%) respondents were in the age group of under 21, 84 (58.7%) respondents were in the age group of above 21.
- The most popular online shopping site that has been preferred by the respondents were 'Myntra' (28.7%) followed

by ‘Flipkart’ (26.6%) and Amazon (21%). The least preferred were Clovia, Ebay, Forever, Stalkbuylove, Street stlye store, Voonik and Zara.

- Majority of the respondents i.e 122 (85.3%) have not enrolled as member in the websites may be due to unaware about the discount coupons or may not be interested to enrol as members.
- 77 (53.8%) respondents indicated that they never visited the websites offering coupons.
- 32 (22.4%) respondents indicated that they visit the websites whenever required.
- The digital shoppers continue to buy products online even without discounts, which is the current trend among e-tailers.
- The most preferred features of digital shopping by the respondents were “links to other web sites”. It is followed by “communication with company” and “communication with users”. The least preferred features were “functional design” and “visual and auditory content”.
- At 75% level in the hierarchical custers, there exist two clusters. The cluster 1 comprises of Communication with company, Communication with users and Links to other websites and this cluster has been named as “Primary features for online shopping”. The second cluster comprises of Functional design, Visual and auditory content, Products and services sold and Payment gateway which can be named as “Other requisite features for online shopping”
- The proximity matrix identified closely related variables and
    - Visual and auditory content and function design
    - Communication with users and Communication with company
    - Communication with company and Visual and auditory content
    - Payment gateway and Products and services sold
- Distinctly related variables
    - Links to other websites and Functional design
    - Payment gateway and Links to other websites
    - Products and services sold and Links to other websites
- The most preferred features of digital shopping web sites, irrespective of male and female respondents were “links to other web sites”. It is followed by “communication with users” and “communication with company”.
- Both male and female respondents were unanimous in indicating their opinion in the case of least preferred features which is functional design and visual and auditory content.
- The respondents of both age groups below 21 and above 21 indicated their first preferred feature as links to other websites. The second and third preferred features of the respondents were communication with the company and communication with others.

- 59 (41.3%) respondents indicated that they prefer mobile for online shopping. It is followed by both desktop and mobile (54, 37.8%).
- It is inferred that mobile is the most preferred device for online shopping may be due to the convenience and ease of use irrespective of environment.
- The first three influencing factors identified were “knits or woven”, “fashion brands” and “apparel choice”. The least influencing factors were “user interface” and “variety of products”.
- The opinion of the both gender and age were identical in the case of most influencing factor that is “knits or woven”.
- The least influencing factors by male respondents were “variety of products” whereas the female respondents opined as “user interface and brand”.
- Non delivery got the least constraint (5^{th} rank) followed by no cash on delivery.
- Irrespective of the gender as well as the age group, the respondents opined that the Cheap product, damaged product and the delay in delivery are the major constrains during the digital shopping.

CONCLUSIONS

The online shopping behaviour were analysed based on four concepts such as popularity, preferences, factor and constraints. The popularity were based on brand names as per as apparel digital shopping is concerned. The online shopping is primarily depends on preferences. The preferences were based on features and the devices. Link to other websites, communication with the users, communication with the company are the most preferred features and mobile is the most preferred digital device for online shopping. The factors influencing the apparel digital shopping were knits or woven; fashion brands and apparel choice. However least influencing factor was given for user interface and variety of products. Cheap products, damaged products and delay in delivery were considered as three important constraints on digital shopping. The respondents didn’t consider non delivery and no case on delivery as a constraint in digital shopping. It clearly indicates that the digital shopping will thrive in coming years.

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